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Make It Clear

Just how far Sen. Eugene McCarthy gets with his call for a Senate investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency is doubtful; but there certainly seems to be plenty of reason for it.

Evidence has been piling up for some time that the CIA, like many Washington agencies and departments, has been overstepping itself in the mission of gathering intelligence.

As Sen. William Fulbright put it the CIA has become "an operating agency in the execution of foreign policy."

The CIA's assigned duty sometimes becomes inadvertently involved in foreign policy. Such was the case of the spy plane over Russia which caused so much embarrassment to this nation in May 1960 and resulted in a shameful exhibition of lies.

More recently, however, the CIA's direct involvement in foreign matters is traced to their entanglement in Guatemalan affairs where a revolt was attempted, with our encouragement, and to the report of the attempt to bribe the prime minister of Singapore. And, lest we forget, the CIA's dominating voice in the decision to launch the Bay of Pigs invasion led to one of this nation's most disastrous setbacks.

Revelation of these events has shocked the innocent citizenry into a cold realization that many decisions are made in this country by the unseen and the unknown.

No one disputes the importance of the CIA nor the necessity of it remaining, as far as the public is concerned, anonymous.

We do doubt and seriously challenge its right to make policy or attempt to exert undue influence in policy making.

Senator McCarthy is not trying to make the CIA a scapegoat or to spotlight its operations. The Minnesota Democrat requests a quiet, but thorough Senate checkup. No one is attempting to diminish the importance of the CIA's designated job, particularly in the nuclear age.

But it would be in the interest of the nation and the administration to set those intelligence heads straight on just what that designated job is.

No one—not even the CIA—should be making the final decisions in any foreign matters. That is up to the man chosen by the people. The President must be accountable for every policy concerning national defense and foreign relations.